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LETTER DATED 4 FEBRUARY 1993 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF UKRAINE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT MADE ON 30 JANUARY 1993 BY LEONID KRAVCHUK, PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE, ON "HOW TO PREVENT THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

I have the honour to forward to you the attached statement of the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, on "How to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons" made at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos on 30 January 1993.

I would be most grateful if, in accordance with the established practice, you would arrange for this statement to be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and circulated to all delegations, both member and observer States.

(Signed): Olexandre SLIPTCHENKO
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of Ukraine

How to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons

Statement by Leonid M. Kravchuk, President of Ukraine,
at the World Economic Forum, Davos, 30 January 1993

The problem of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is one of the acutest problems of the modern age and a source of concern both to statesmen and to world public opinion. It is at the centre of the attention of the Ukraine's political leaders and of its parliament. The possibility of growth in the number of nuclear weapons and of a corresponding increase in the risk of unauthorized use of such weapons is a real threat to international peace and security.

At present the only instrument at the international community's disposal in its efforts to forestall that threat is the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Special responsibility for universal compliance with the provisions of the NPT lies above all on the nuclear Powers, especially the depositaries of the Treaty.

Recognizing the importance of this international instrument and proceeding from the premise that accession to it is in Ukraine's highest interests, I have placed before the Supreme Council a proposal that Ukraine should accede to the Treaty. At the same time, proposals have also been submitted for the parliament's consideration for the ratification of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic and Offensive Arms (the START Treaty) and the Lisbon Protocol thereto.

I.

Intensive hearings on this issue are in progress in the Supreme Council's parliamentary commissions and a special working group. That is a normal process requiring some time.

The Ukrainian parliament has an enormous responsibility to the country's people for seeing to it that all aspects of the START Treaty, the Lisbon Protocol to that instrument and NPT are given the most careful study and that all possible consequences for Ukraine, especially for its military and environmental security, as well as the country's possible financial losses in connection with the obligations it assumes, are analysed. After all, it is not a matter of a one-third or two-thirds cut in nuclear weapons, but of the total elimination of such weapons in Ukraine, something that will have serious consequences from the point of view of the security and even of the very existence of Ukraine as an independent State. An overwhelming majority of deputies have expressed support for Ukraine's nuclear-free option, which the Supreme Council proclaimed as long ago as 1990. At the same time, however, deputies are insisting on the resolution of a number of issues of importance to us before the START Treaty and NPT are submitted for final approval by the parliament.

This is a reference to the provision to Ukraine of guarantees of its national security by the nuclear Powers that are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the provision to Ukraine of genuine help in

funding programmes for the elimination of the nuclear weapons in Ukraine and in defining the future use of the nuclear components of the strategic and tactical warheads that are deployed in Ukraine or have already been removed from its territory for dismantling in Russia.

It is felt that not all our partners understand just why Ukraine is raising these issues or on what its demands are based. It would seem worthwhile taking a few minutes to explain - in connection with Ukraine's forthcoming accession to NPT - how we see the problem of the nuclear weapons deployed in Ukraine.

II.

The situation regarding the nuclear weapons deployed on the territory of Ukraine is unique, without precedent in the history of the world. For the first time a State which, together with the other successor States of the former USSR, has the right to be nuclear is pursuing a policy of achieving non-nuclear status. What is more, on the territory of this State - Ukraine - there are already nuclear weapons that do not belong to any other State and that have merely been placed under the operational control of the Unified Command of the Strategic Forces of CIS.

In renouncing nuclear weapons, which are an unquestionably effective means of restraining any potential aggressor, Ukraine is indisputably entitled to demand from the nuclear Powers guarantees of its national security.

That means a legally binding political instrument adopted at the highest level by the nuclear Powers, and first and foremost Russia and the United States of America, to the effect that those Powers will not use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, will not employ against it conventional weapons or the threat of force, will refrain from applying economic pressure in order to resolve any contentious issues, and will respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders.

Those undertakings mainly repeat generally recognized principles of international law as defined in particular in the CSCE Final Act (1975) and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. But it is important for us that they should be reaffirmed in the context of Ukraine's acquisition in the future of the status of a non-nuclear weapon State. As the course of the discussions in the commissions of our Supreme Council shows, there is not yet full clarity on this matter and a significant number of deputies are not ready for the START Treaty and NPT to be submitted for ratification. We cannot be hasty here; we must convince the deputies with facts, not words.

III.

Ukraine did not participate in the taking of the decisions that led to the stationing on its territory of the world's third most powerful missile force. But all the same the people of Ukraine had, at the expense of its own welfare and economic development, to finance the nuclear arms race of the former Soviet Union.

Now it is in practice being demanded of us that we should finance a huge programme connected with the destruction of those weapons. That means not just the destruction of strategic offensive weapons on account of the requirements of environmental security and economic expediency, which we would have to do anyway, but compliance in that connection with the extremely complex and very costly procedures laid down in the START Treaty for the sole purpose of preventing the former USSR from circumventing its provisions.

One way or another we shall have to destroy the nuclear arms on the territory of Ukraine. However, we are entitled to expect in the destruction of those weapons genuine assistance consistent with our expenditure on the destruction of such weapons. So far, we have not received a single cent from the West for this purpose. But can it really be that the West is not interested in eliminating nuclear weapons in our country as soon as possible? They are certainly well aware there that we cannot manage this task on our own.

We are grateful to the United States, which has offered to provide us with financial and technical assistance in the amount of $175 million for the destruction of nuclear weapons. But it can easily be understood that this sum will by no means cover all Ukraine's likely expenses, and we hope that other States, particularly nuclear States, will join the United States in this matter. In this connection, we have proposed the creation of a special international fund for nuclear disarmament.

It can hardly be expected of us that, in this difficult economic situation, priority will be given to nuclear arms reduction rather than to the laying of the foundations of a sound, socially-oriented market economy. It must be said openly that, in view of the crisis in our economy, Ukraine can only allocate from its own budget limited sums for the execution of a programme to eliminate strategic offensive weapons.

IV.

The next problem is that of deciding the future use of the highly enriched uranium and plutonium from the strategic warheads stationed in Ukraine and the tactical warheads that have been taken to Russia to be dismantled. This question is of fundamental importance for us.

Ukraine does not exercise operational control over the Strategic Forces stationed on its territory and consequently does not control, within the meaning of NPT, nuclear warheads. On the other hand, all the components of the nuclear warheads that are subject to dismantling and to destruction are the property of Ukraine. We are merely interested in being able, once the nuclear warheads have been dismantled and destroyed, to use their components to resolve problems of Ukraine's economic development and, in particular, of fuelling Ukraine's nuclear power stations.

Negotiations on this issue with the Russian Federation began recently and we hope that their final outcome will be positive.

The resolution of the aforementioned issues will help to speed up the adoption by the Ukrainian Supreme Council of a positive decision concerning accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the ratification of the START Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol thereto, but delay by the western Powers on which their resolution depends places on those Powers equal responsibility for the protracting of the process of examination of those important instruments in the Ukrainian parliament.

V.

Although it would be an important step in the strengthening of NPT, Ukraine's accession to that instrument will not remove the problem of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world.

It is common knowledge that today there are at least fifteen what are termed "threshold" States that are close to, or suspected of making their own nuclear weapons. Many experts believe that some of them already have nuclear weapons.

But even with the present level of technological development in those countries, for them to make nuclear weapons by relying solely on their own capabilities is impossible. In carrying out their nuclear programmes, all these countries have had the support of some or other of the nuclear Powers. Some countries suspected of already having nuclear weapons which are not parties to NPT are receiving large-scale assistance from nuclear Powers in the military, economic and other spheres and are not being subjected to any real pressure from those Powers to encourage them to accede to this Treaty and renounce their nuclear ambitions.

Ukraine considers that in the present day and age no State, and still less a nuclear State, can pursue the twofold policy common in the recent past in the domain of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that all nuclear Powers, without exception, must take the course followed by Ukraine, the course of acquisition in the future, hopefully the near future, of non-nuclear status, and that they must pursue a uniform, consistent policy as regards ensuring the universal implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the accession to this international instrument of all the world's States.